

Social Questions

BULLETIN

of the Methodist Federation for Social Service (unofficial), an organization which rejects the method of the struggle for profit as the economic base for society; which seeks to replace it with social-economic planning in order to develop a society without class distinctions and privileges.

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Methodists Go On Record

The ministerial and lay members of the New York, the New York East, the Newark, the Troy and the Wyoming Annual Conferences of the Methodist Church during April and May, 1941, adopted the following pronouncements upon the significant issues of our day:

PREDICAMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN

"The predicament of the Christian man in the face of the world situation is to defend the Christian values from destruction by hostile attack, without himself destroying them in the process of defending them.

"There is a difference of opinion within our church as to what policies of government are wisest to defend the integrity of the nation without marring or destroying Christian values.

"1. Some Christians hold that the supreme peril to all Christian values is participation in war, that the most Christian thing the United States can do is to avoid being drawn into the struggle between the Axis powers and the democracies.

"2. Others hold that, while war is always sin, it is not possible in some human situations to avoid participating in this sin, if we are able to continue later the struggle for the establishment of the Christian values.

"3. Still others hold that whether participation in war is sin depends upon the purpose for which the war is waged and the spirit with which it is waged. They use the analogy of a policeman destroying the life of a dangerous bandit without anger, hatred, or sin, or the analogy of the surgeon removing a malignant growth that the body may be restored to health. In such a situation the Christian may regard participation as a fulfillment of Christian duty.

"We are divided in opinions on these matters, but we are undivided in our desire to maintain within our fellowship our brethren who differ with us. We must, therefore, maintain the right of the conscientious objectors, both religious and political, to exemption from service under military authorities and protect them where possible from the discriminations in industry which subject them to persecution." (*New York East.*)

"We recognize the pronounced disagreement of opinion among Christian ministers and laymen regarding the action which Christians should take in the present world crisis. We believe that the church's most effective ministry in this emergency is not to identify itself institutionally either with the pacifists, on the one hand, or with those

who would resort reluctantly to war, on the other hand. Our task is to maintain within the church an unbroken fellowship of understanding and reconciliation, and to give leadership looking toward the new world order to come after the cessation of hostilities." (*Troy.*)

THE CHURCH AND WAR

"We emphatically reaffirm the statement of the General Conference of our Church: '... We insist that the agencies of the Church shall not be used in the preparation for war, but in the promulgation of peace. We believe that war is utterly destructive and is our greatest collective social sin and a denial of the ideals of Christ. We stand upon this ground, that the Methodist Church as an institution cannot endorse war nor support or participate in it.'" (*New York East.*)

PEACE AIMS

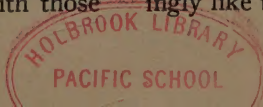
"We believe that our government with utter candor should state the peace aims of the United States and that this country should use the prestige and power it enjoys among the nations of the world to obtain from Great Britain a more specific declaration of what it means by a 'new order in Europe.'" (*Wyoming.*)

SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION

"In the white heat of total warfare unbridled emotions lead to hate and destruction, but the Christian conscience and intellect seek to turn even such devastation to creative ends. So the leadership of the Church of England, conservative though it may be judged to be, has been forced to pierce the complacency of artificial peace and face the forces that breed conflict and injustice in society.

"Conscious of the revolutionary nature of the crisis, English leadership feels that it is 'essential to discover and provide a religious urge—a dynamism of constructive democracy reconciling liberty with unity, and capable of encountering and ultimately of absorbing the revolutionary motives and enthusiasms which animate the fascist, the totalitarian systems. . . . This implies and involves the commitment to a new social gospel—to the vision and the reality of a new social and economic order—repudiating scarcity, monopoly, exploitation, and ensuring an equal security for the common people everywhere. . . ."

"At the Malvern Conference our English brothers have revealed a determination to reorganize society on lines that should encourage the support of all Christians, and should serve as a stimulus to our thinking in the field of Christian social action. They arrived at decisions strikingly like those of the Social Creed of the Church and the



program of the Methodist Federation for Social Service." (*New York East.*)

"It was an amazing fact that, in the midst of war, British churchmen, under the leadership of the Archbishop of York, should have presented to the world the now famous Malvern statement. Part of that declaration was as follows: 'We believe that the church should declare that maintenance of that part of the structure of our society by which the ownership of great resources of our community can be vested in the hands of private individuals is a stumbling block. The time has come, therefore, for Christians to proclaim the need for seeking some form of society in which this stumbling block will be removed.'" (*Wyoming.*)

WORLD COMMUNITY

The Newark Annual Conference of the Methodist Church petitioned "the President of these United States to appoint a COMMISSION, to be composed of: (a) outstanding private citizens; (b) members of both Houses of Congress; (c) members of the Departments of State and Labor—the duty of which COMMISSION shall be (1) to study the problem of World Community and International Organization (taking cognizance of plans and suggestions which have already emerged in both the United States and foreign countries); (2) to furnish a point of focus and means of contact for thought developing in this country along these lines; and (3) to publish its conclusions and recommendations for the public." (*Newark.*)

CONVOYS

"We request the President and the Congress to take at once the necessary steps to make the Navy of the United States available for the purpose of protecting and convoying the war materials and supplies which shall now be sent from the United States to those peoples now engaged in withstanding the onslaught of the Axis powers." (*New York.*)

"Reaffirming our abhorrence of war as the supreme expression of human collective sin, we insist upon a policy of nonintervention in the wars which are raging abroad and therefore, since our own President has said 'convoys mean shooting and shooting means war,' we protest the proposal to use our naval or air forces to convoy munition-laden vessels through belligerent waters." (*New York East.*)

FOOD FOR NON-BELLIGERENTS

"In view of the movement of this country to send food to the suffering non-belligerent peoples of Europe, under safeguards that will secure for the afflicted peoples the food sent them, and will prevent either side in the conflict from deriving any military loss or benefit therefrom, this Conference desires to place itself on record to the effect that:

"1. It cherishes a sincere sympathy for all peoples subjugated and dominated by the armed might of foreign powers.

"2. It is deeply moved by the sufferings thus forced upon the civilian populations, particularly the young and the aged.

"3. It has no desire to support or to increase, either directly or indirectly, the armed might by which those subjugated nations are oppressed.

"4. This Conference is not in a position to say authoritatively whether or not the safeguards promised can be successfully put into effect, but in view of the compassion of our Lord and Master for suffering humanity, it hereby expresses its approval and support of an experiment in the form of initial, small shipments to determine whether or not the highest interests of the suffering peoples can be best served thereby." (*New York.*)

EMBARGO OIL FROM JAPAN

"For years now we have been supplying Japan with munitions of war. . . .

"We recommend the discontinuation of the sale of all petroleum products to Japan until Japan has withdrawn her armies from China." (*New York East.*)

RETARDATION OF DEFENSE

"On pages 171-172 of the Temporary National Economic Committee's study, Economic Power and Political Pressures, it is stated:

"In the 1940 national defense crisis business displayed much of the same attitude that it had shown twenty-three years earlier (*i.e.*, during the first World War, when Judge Gary, of the United States Steel Corporation, said, 'Manufacturers must have reasonable profits in order to do their duty'). Business would help the government and the people, but the basis of payment therefor would have to be fixed before the wheels would begin to turn. Profits, taxes, loans and so forth appeared more important to business than getting guns, tanks and airplane motors into production.

"For months the government's desire to get the program moving was offset by business' desire to get the terms of cooperation settled to their liking. It developed that business did not want to work for the country on the basis of the 7 or 8 per cent profit limitation written into the Vinson-Trammell Naval Expansion Act of 1935, so that these provisions were repealed.' (This naturally resulted in war profiteering.) . . ."

"The National City Bank, summarizing the financial results of 925 leading manufacturing corporations, points out that net profits of these corporations in 1940, after deducting depreciation, interest, taxes and all other charges, but before dividends, amounted to \$1,554,280,000 as compared with \$1,225,069,000 in 1939; an increase of 26.9 per cent. In terms of return on net worth, a rise from 8.4 per cent in 1939 to 10.5 per cent in 1940.

"Eighteen aircraft and parts corporations secured an increase of 290 per cent in profits in 1940 as compared with 1939. The per cent return on net worth rose from 10.2 in 1939 to 25.7 in 1940.

"Forty-three iron and steel corporations secured an increase of 98.5 per cent in profits in 1940 as compared with 1939. The per cent return on net worth rose from 4.4 in 1939 to 8.5 in 1940. . . ."

"These facts demonstrate how great corporations in their successful struggle for profits have held up the national defense program. In fact, they have held it up in a far more serious manner than have the workers by striking for a wage that might enable them to have a decent standard of living. Ought we not, therefore, we, the members of the New York East Annual Conference, raise the question as to whether the Congress and the

President of the United States, acting in the interest of national defense, should purchase the Aluminum Company of America and the United States Steel Corporation and then quickly expand the production of aluminum and steel for both defense and civilian needs?" (*New York East.*)

WAR PROFITEERING

"We heartily endorse the position taken recently by the President of the United States to the effect that no individual or group of individuals should grow rich out of this war effort. We believe that communal sacrifice, great suffering, and the shedding of blood are not the occasion for the accumulation of excessive personal gain. We, therefore, call upon the Government to use every safeguard, including its power to tax, to prevent any and all war profiteering." (*New York.*)

STRIKES

"Today there is considerable anxiety in the public mind over the strikes which are occurring in industries vital to national defense. This anxiety, it would appear, arises not so much over the exercise of labor's right to strike and picket for ends which appear worthwhile to themselves, as the effect these strikes have in delaying the production of defense materials for our own country and for these belligerent nations whose cause we have elected to espouse. This legitimate anxiety is heightened out of all proportion to the facts by the effort on the part of some sections of the press and certain *labor-baiting* Congressmen to identify every strike which occurs in our national economy as a strike to delay national defense. The facts give a far different picture. . . .

"Familiarity with labor problems from month to month in recent years cuts away the ground from the charge that the present labor situation amounts to a conspiracy to block the effective rearmament of this nation. . . . Again the facts simply do not warrant any such conclusion. . . .

"That there are a few unjust and even unjustified strikes, that there may be a few strikes provoked by persons or organizations who desire to cripple or slow down our national defense effort is not denied. *What is denied is that any such blanket remedies as the Vinson Bill outlawing strikes is necessary to remedy the situation.* The high officials charged by the President to plan and facilitate defense production are all opposed to any such remedy. They know from actual experience that a coerced workman is a poor and inefficient producer. We cannot take away the liberty of the very workmen upon whom we are depending so greatly to produce the weapons to save our liberty and democracy." (*New York East.*)

CIVIL LIBERTIES

"We appreciate, and pledge ourselves to defend, our constitutional rights, viz., freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of press and radio, freedom of worship, freedom for both employers and employees to organize themselves into associations and unions for their mutual good; the right of every responsible citizen of twenty-one years or over, regardless of race or creed, to have a voice in representative government through the ballot; the freedom of both teachers and students in our halls of learning fearlessly to pursue and share the truth;

the right of every person to the full protection of his constitutional liberties should he be subject to arrest, confinement in jail, or the process of a public trial, regardless of the character of the charge brought against him." (*New York.*)

DEFENSE OF NATIONAL DEFENDERS

"We are appalled on the basis of our own visits and from first-hand reports, at the breakdown of morals in and near the great training centers. Army commanding officers have had to step in and place certain whole towns 'off limits' to protect our young men from the open flouting of drink, gambling, and prostitution. . . .

"As we view soldiers drunken on the streets, enforced curfew for our girls, young men cut off from home ties dabbling experimentally in vice and drink, church people seemingly unable to grasp where or how to tackle the situation, local politicians whitewashing conditions, and chaplains distressed over the inability to handle the coalition of liquor, gambling, and prostitution off the grounds on pay-days, we are tempted to ask, Should not national defense defend the national defenders?

"Churches, however, can open recreational centers and provide equipment within vacant stores and church halls. We can bring pressure on our local leaders so that our avenues do not look like an 'old home week' for street-walkers. We can request the commanding officers to place certain more notorious places 'off limits' and guard them with the military police." (*New York East.*)

NO JIM CROW DEFENSE

"At a time when we are being asked to defend democracy and the Christian values of racial equality and opportunity, we should be at particular pains to remove from the important phases of national defense the vestiges of our own racial discriminations." (*New York East.*)

CONSUMER COOPERATIVES

"The protection of the consumer is the more urgent in the face of a rising tide of prices. . . . The purchasing power of the consumer's dollar becomes less and less.

"The glaring contrast, therefore, between the reports of increased profits reported daily in the financial pages of the press and the corrective potentialities within the cooperative movement suggests the wisdom of all Christians moving toward a closer study of and an increased support for the consumer cooperative movement." (*New York East.*)

AFTERMATH OF WAR

"The dislocation of industry and consequent mass unemployment which followed the last world war, with their demoralizing effects upon millions of people, are still vivid in our memories.

"This Conference, therefore, approves the purpose of Bill 59, now before Congress calling for the establishment of a National Commission on unemployment and post-war economic adjustment with a view to the elimination of mass unemployment and the prevention of such economic conditions at the close of the war or the completion of our program for national defense." (*New York.*)

Christian World Order

Report of Joint Commissions on Political Structure of the "Commission on World Peace of the Methodist Church" Conference held at Chicago, May 27-30.

"We believe in a World Community based upon cooperation rather than conflict. This World Community will recognize and guarantee freedom of thought, assembly, speech and worship. It will respect minorities, not only national and racial, but also intellectual and spiritual. It will recognize the principle that both institutional and natural resources throughout the world exist for, and shall be used for, the benefit of all mankind rather than of any favored individuals or groups. Even the State exists for man, not man for the State.

"The inner spiritual unity of mankind and the interrelatedness of peoples demand a political, economic, and cultural structure to encourage and sustain this emerging world consciousness. With due regard for emergency temporary measures we are entitled nevertheless to seek and to state ultimate objectives which may be attained as the result of planning and effort already begun."

I. Political

"In the political realm it must be realized that unlimited national sovereignty, as formerly practiced and as now exemplified in the tragic series of wars throughout the world, is outmoded and subject to replacement by some more inclusive and responsible world order. Ultimately there must be a world federation or union including all the existing sovereignties, each of which must relinquish some of its authority and powers to the world organization. The latter may well consist of executive, legislative and judicial agencies operating not only upon the member peoples or groups, but also, on occasion, upon individuals themselves.

"This world organization may assume all the necessary functions and activities which have been pursued by all existing international agen-

cies, as the League of Nations, the World Court, and the International Labor Organization; it may assume also such new interests and responsibilities as may from time to time arise. It may codify and expand international law until the latter comes to be accepted as the authoritative basis for all world action. The international body may enforce its legal and necessary decisions by all appropriate means, including, if need be, economic sanctions, at least in regard to materials which may be directly or indirectly of military use.

"National armaments of all types must be considered subject to international world control. The reduction of armaments to the lowest point consistent with the maintenance of domestic and world stability constitutes one of the most imperative and difficult tasks of the reconstruction period.... If military power is to be used, it clearly should be entrusted to a world organization rather than to the armies of national states.

"Provision must be made for continuous peaceful change demanded by population pressures, economic inequalities, political and racial readjustments. Related together under this world organization may well be constructed a series of local federations such as a United States of Europe, each exercising responsible authority over regional matter subject only to the all-inclusive world body."

II. Economic

"Consistent with the principle of change and realizing that undeveloped natural resources have tended to become a source of imperial rivalry and conflict we recognize the need of making the resources of all the world, particularly of colonies and less fully developed areas, subject to international use. The exciting mandate system should be broadened so as to include more territory, and to have the mandated region subject no longer to a single national but to the world organization. There would be a related international body working with and for colonial peoples and lands in the promotion of a progres-

sive movement toward self-government and freedom and toward the development of resources, first for the interests of colonials, and second that of the world.

"Regular meetings of economic experts under the world political body or an affiliated economic organization may regulate the development of and trade in all essential materials according to the needs and demands of the entire world, and with due regard for the rights and welfare of the inhabitants of the less developed countries."

III. Cultural

"As another ultimate goal, we stress increased cultural understanding among all peoples. Modern inventions and swift communications must bind, rather than separate, mankind. A constant exchange of goods, ideas, and the distinctive contributions of each nation of teachers, students, research experts, and statesmen, will improve and strengthen international solidarity....

"Surely Christianity must so examine and purify itself that it may serve as an important tie in the emerging world community."

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